



LIBBY GILL & CO

12 Ways to Get Your Creative Juices Flowing

Don't wait for inspiration, instead get moving.

By Libby Gill

I danced my way through school: ballet in elementary, tap in high school and jazz in college.

I had some great teachers, but my all-time favorite was Betsy, a chain-smoking, frizzy-haired former hippie who taught modern dance at Cal State Long Beach. Betsy gave me some of the best advice, not just for dance but also for life, when she was directing a musical in which I was performing. I was having a terrible time executing a lift where my partner was supposed to catch me mid-air and dramatically dip me toward the floor. My partner's technique was flawless, but all I could think about was breaking my nose.

So when Betsy saw how my fear was rendering our lift lifeless, she stubbed out her ever-present cigarette, got in my face and yelled, "Commit to the movement!" Her point? I was stopping the creative process before it even started by not fully committing to the steps.

"You've got to dance badly," she told me, "if you're ever going to dance boldly." She was absolutely right. If we let our fear, doubt or insecurity stop us, then we're never going to get into the creative flow.

Whether or not you work in a creative field, we all possess creative gifts once we get out of our own way and let them flow. So let your juices flow by trying one or more of the following:

- Commit to thinking about yourself as a creative being. Don't allow yourself to wonder if you're really creative. Just surrender to being a creative being.
- Create rituals for different parts of the day. Try writing in a journal in the morning, yoga midday or candlelight bubble baths at bedtime. Now commit to a ritual a day for an entire week.
- Produce a tangible work of art. Paint your masterpiece and let yourself get lost in the moment.
- Form a drum circle. Discover the incredible sense of community that comes from

- making music, even primitive music, with a group of friends.
- Ask your children to suggest something creative you can do, like kite making or cake decorating, and then do it. And if you don't have a kid, borrow one from a friend.
 - Eavesdrop on your negative inner critic. Identify what it's saying – "you're wasting time," "you're not creative" – then turn down the volume and replace those messages with positive ones.
 - Take a hike, literally. Walk through an unfamiliar part of town or in a natural setting and indulge all your senses.
 - Discover the Zen of window washing. Pick a chore that requires repetitive action, preferably one where you can see your results, such as window washing, painting a fence or pulling weeds, and let your thoughts float as you work.
 - Write a poem, essay or short story. Commit to being OK with writing badly.
 - There's an old Chinese saying – "Move 27 things and you'll change your life." Go move 27 things in your home or office and see what happens.
 - Let go of the outcome. Believe in yourself and your ideas and don't worry about how everything will turn out.
 - Make time. Find an hour for pure creative exploration every day for a week. Now figure out how you're going to hold yourself accountable, or who can help hold you accountable, and start your creative journey with one of the activities listed above within the next 24 hours.

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